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SUBJECT: NON-PAPER ON FUTURE OF INTERNATIONAL SCIENCE AND
TECHNOLOGY CENTER (ISTC)

- ¶1. (U) This is an action cable. Please see paragraphs 3.
- ¶2. (U) Objective: To advance our bilateral discussions with the Russians on the future of the ISTC. Please pass the non-paper at paragraph 3 to the appropriate host government officials.
- ¶3. (U) Begin Text Transformation of the International Science and Technology Center Non-Paper

Acting Under Secretary of State John C. Rood and Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Kislyak have discussed the future of the International Science and Technology Center (ISTC). Deputy Foreign Minister Kislyak has said that Russia believes the ISTC is useful as a means for scientific exchange and collaboration and agrees with the U.S. that the mission of the ISTC needs to evolve. Deputy Foreign Minister Kislyak agreed that there could be bilateral discussions in the future.

U.S. Department of State representatives met with officials of the Russian Embassy in Washington informally to discuss the U.S. interest in conducting bilateral meetings at the expert-level to follow-up on the Kislyak and Rood discussions. An informal consensus was reached that the U.S. would develop this non-paper to begin the bilateral discussion and that multilateral meetings would follow with all the ISTC stakeholders.

In 2006, ISTC Governing Board members revisited the question of how to transform the original ISTC mission of redirecting former weapons scientists to one that furthers members, joint WMD nonproliferation efforts; the Board discussed a future ISTC that effectively tailors project and programmatic activities towards nonproliferation, and also seeks to advance partnerships on key scientific challenges of interest. The Secretariat developed a paper that was discussed at many ISTC meetings, including at a working group dedicated to the issue.

The U.S. sees great value in holding bilateral discussions on ways to transform the ISTC that would strengthen important U.S.-Russian nonproliferation collaborative efforts. Russia's ideas and proposals on transformation are critical for the ISTC to remain a successful tool for nonproliferation and scientific exchange. The U.S. proposes that a bilateral discussion on the ISTC's future include:

-- Transforming the ISTC to be a focal point for international cooperation on WMD nonproliferation, and counterterrorism by:

-- expanding ISTC participation beyond the states that formerly comprised the Soviet Union

-- broadening the strategic priorities to foster both international and regional partnerships and addressing both global proliferation and terrorism challenges

-- Exploring multiple funding mechanisms to advance strategic nonproliferation goals

-- Assessing the current and future economic circumstances of scientists, technicians, and engineers with WMD and missile expertise in Russia and the the states that formerly comprised the Soviet Union

-- Assessing the evolving economic circumstances of ISTC funding parties and discuss the prospects of increased joint funding

-- Coordinating ISTC efforts with other ongoing scientific and technical cooperation between the U.S. and Russia

The U.S. proposes to hold bilateral, expert-level meetings in Washington or Moscow to include multiple Russian agencies, including the Ministry of Education and Science, the Russian Academy of Science, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and ROSATOM, and their American counterparts such as the Department of State, the Department of Energy, the U.S. National Academy of Sciences, and other USG ISTC partners.